

**Stainton, Hilton and Brookfield**  
**Christ the king – 22 November 20**  
**Sunday next before Advent**

**WELCOME. to Worship at home.**

**Thought for the day**

In humility, at one with the least of his people, Jesus the Messiah or Christ reigns as King, with full authority and honour for eternity. *Susan Sayer*

**COLLECT**

Eternal Father, whose Son Jesus Christ ascended to the throne of heaven that he might rule over all things as Lord and King: keep the Church in the unity of the Spirit and in the bond of peace, and bring the whole created order to worship at his feet; who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen

**The book of the prophet Ezekiel.**  
**ch34.11–16, 20–24**

Thus says the Lord GOD: I myself will search for my sheep, and will seek them out. As shepherds seek out their flocks when they are among their scattered sheep, so I will seek out my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places to which they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land; and I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the watercourses, and in all the inhabited parts of the land. I will feed them with good pasture, and the

mountain heights of Israel shall be their pasture; there they shall lie down in good grazing land, and they shall feed on rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will make them lie down, says the Lord GOD. I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, but the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them with justice.

Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD to them: I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. Because you pushed with flank and shoulder, and butted at all the weak animals with your horns until you scattered them far and wide, I will save my flock, and they shall no longer be ravaged; and I will judge between sheep and sheep. I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd. And I, the LORD, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them; I, the LORD, have spoken.

**Psalm 100**

**R We are his people and the sheep of his pasture.**

1 Be joyful in the Lord, all you lands;  
serve the Lord with gladness  
and come before his presence with a song.

2 Know this: The Lord himself is God;  
he himself has made us and we are his;  
we are his people and the sheep of his pasture.

3 Enter his gates with thanksgiving;

go into his courts with praise;  
give thanks to him and call upon his name.

4 For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his faithfulness endures from age to age.

**R We are his people and the sheep of his pasture.**

**The letter of Paul to the Ephesians.**  
**ch 1.15–23**

I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love towards all the saints, and for this reason I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power. God put this power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come. And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

**In this gospel story we reach the end of the series of parables in Matthew dealing with the Day of Judgement. We are told here that all nations; people of other faiths and none; are gathered before the throne of God. It is shown to them how, in their human goodness and kindness and thoughtful service to others, they have unknowingly been serving the God of love and therefore belong to his Kingdom. But also the reverse is true even for those who think themselves worthy. It is not simply doing harm to others that shows a rejection of God's ways. The goodness we fail to do, the needs we do not notice or choose to ignore these all place us outside of His Kingdom.**

**The gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew. 25.31-46**

Jesus said to his disciples:

`When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. Then the king will say to those at his right hand, "Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me." Then the

righteous will answer him, "Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?"

And the king will answer them, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me." Then he will say to those at his left hand, "You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me."

Then they also will answer, "Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?" Then he will answer them, "Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me." And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.'

**This is the Gospel of the Lord**

**Let us pray** *please add your own prayers*  
Loving God in all our ministries as your church, both laity and clergy, on Sundays and on week days, may we give glory to you. Help us to be peaceable, to actively seek to do good, and to stand up against

injustice. Give us wisdom to know how to draw others to your love. Give us courage to act as true citizens of heaven  
**We are your people, the sheep of your pasture.**

Loving God, protect us from earthly excesses. May the way we manage our lives, our homes, decisions, time and money be in keeping with our calling to be inheritors of your kingdom. **We are your people, the sheep of your pasture.**

Loving God, help us to remember that you have no hands but ours to reach out to those in need. Help us in your name to use the abilities you have given us to be gentle to those who feel lost, to be caring towards those who are injured or ill in body, mind or spirit, to be loving in a broken world. **We are your people, the sheep of your pasture.**

Loving God, welcome into your kingdom all whose lives show them to be your servants whether or not they have known you by name. Prepare us all to meet you with the confidence of sins confessed and forgiven **We are your people and the sheep of your pasture.**

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